

# Father Kennard Muller, founding pastor of Edgewood parish, dies

Father Kennard Muller, a native Baltimorean and the founding pastor of Prince of Peace in Edgewood, died March 20 at age 84.

"Father Ken loved the priesthood and he loved being in a parish," said Monsignor James Barker, pastor of St. Ignatius Hickory, where Father Muller was in residence during his retirement. "He simply enjoyed people."

"First & Forever," a people's history of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, recounts how, in 1975, Father Muller first celebrated Mass at the Harford Square Recreation Center for 500 Catholics in the Edgewood area.

He then began celebrating the liturgy at the Edgewood Cinema, where the marquee read "Welcome Church." From those humble beginnings came the formation of Prince of Peace Parish in 1977.

"He took some stragglers and knitted us into a faith community," said Jan Murdza, who remained a parishioner of Prince of Peace even after she and her late husband moved to Abingdon. "We needed Father Ken Muller to pull us together."

The faith community got a parish center in 1982, but it took nearly two decades to raise enough money to build a church, which was dedicated in November 1996.

"When people asked where our church was, we looked to each other," Murdza said. "(Father Muller) made us church; he made us a faith community."

The oldest of four children, Father Muller was born in 1933 in Baltimore and attended the parish schools at St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Highlandtown and St. Rose of Lima in Brooklyn. He attended Patterson Park High School and St. Jerome's College in Ontario, Canada.

He served in the U.S. Air Force as an air traffic controller, 1953-57, then entered the seminary in Ontario, Canada. He completed his seminary studies at Mount St.

Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg.

He was ordained May 21, 1966, by Cardinal Lawrence Shehan at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Homeland, and celebrated his first Mass at the Shrine of the Little Flower in Belair-Edison the following day.

Father Muller's first assignments were at Most Precious Blood in Baltimore, 1966-67; the archdiocesan tribunal, as secretary, 1967-72; St. Bernard in Baltimore, 1972; and St. Rita in Dundalk, 1972.

In 1973, he was appointed administrator of St. Peter in Oakland, while completing an assignment from Cardinal Shehan to help establish a Total Christian Education Center for Western Maryland.

Father Muller served the Prince of Peace community from 1975 until 1986, when he was forced to retire from active ministry due to serious heart conditions. That did not, however, stop him from helping in parish ministry.

After major surgery in 2008, he spent his final 10 years in residence at St. Ignatius in Hickory, where he was known for being a confessor and his love of dining out with members of the community.

"He was faithful to his priestly ministry to the end, having heard confessions just hours before the Lord called him home," Monsignor Barker said.

All services will be held at St. Ignatius in Hickory. Archbishop William E. Lori will offer a funeral Mass March 27 at 11 a.m. Visitations and viewings will be held at the church March 26, 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., and March 27, 9-10:30 a.m., with a Christian Wake Service March 26 at 7:30 p.m.

*Read more obituaries **here**.*

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